

Message Text

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AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1636

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL TAKES NEW POWERS

REF: LISBON 1547

SUMMARY: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL HAS ATTRIBUTED TO ITSELF SPECIFIC POWER TO CARRY OUT THE STRUCTURAL REFORM OF THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMY. FOUR NEW OFFICERS ARE NAMED TO THE COUNCIL. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING LENGTHY SESSION MARCH 21, THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) ANNOUNCED MODIFICATIONS TO THE LAW WHICH HAVE THE EFFECT OF GIVING IT MARKEDLY INCREASED AUTHORITY. THE RC HAD ALREADY ATTRIBUTED TO ITSELF THE POWERS FORMERLY HELD BY
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THE NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA AND THE COUNCIL OF STATE. IN

ADDITION, RC NOW ASSUMES THE LEGISLATIVE POWERS "NECESSARY FOR THE STRUCTURAL REFORM OF THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMY." RC ALSO ASSUMES LEGISLATIVE POWERS FORMERLY HELD BY COUNCIL OF ARMED FORCES CHIEFS OF STAFF.

2. THE AMENDMENTS ALSO PROVIDE THAT THE RC WILL EXERCISE THE CONSTITUTIONAL POWER, FORMERLY HELD BY THE COUNCIL OF STATE, UNTIL THE PROMULGATION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION TO BE PREPARED BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

3. FOUR ADDITIONAL OFFICERS NAMED TO THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ARE REAR ADMIRAL VITOR CRESPO, MAJOR MELO ANTUNES, MAJOR VICTOR ALVES, AND CAPTAIN COSTA MARTINS. CRESPO IS CURRENTLY HIGH COMMISSIONER IN MOZAMBIQUE. ANTUNES AND ALVES ARE MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, AND COSTA MARTINS IS MINISTER OF LABOR. NEWLY DESIGNATED MEMBERS SUPPOSEDLY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE FULLY IN RC AS LONG AS THEY HOLD THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS.

4. INCREASE IN RC AUTHORITY AND ADDITIONS IN MEMBERSHIP RESULT FROM AMENDMENTS TO LAW 5/75, THE AUTHORIZING DOCUMENT FOR THE COUNCIL. A NEW ARTICLE TWO STATES THAT THE RC IS PRESIDED BY THE PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC AND COMPOSED OF PRESIDENT; THE CHIEF AND VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES; CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THREE ARMED SERVICES; DEPUTY COMMANDER OF COPCON; COORDINATING COMMISSION OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) CONSTITUTED BY THREE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE ARMY, TWO FROM THE NAVY AND TWO FROM THE AIR FORCE; NINE INDIVIDUALS DESIGNATED BY THE AFM (FIVE ARMY, TWO NAVY, TWO AIR FORCE), ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE FORMER NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA; AND THE PRIME MINISTER (IF A MILITARY OFFICER). OFFICERS OF THE COORDINATING COMMISSION OF THE AFM DESIGNATED FOR OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ALTHOUGH NOT EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE RC WHILE IMPEDED BY THEIR OTHER MISSION. (THIS WOULD APPLY TO THE FOUR NEWLY DESIGNATED MEMBERS.) THE AFM MAY WITHDRAW THE MANDATE OF ANY OF ITS REPRESENTATIVES TO THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

5. COMMENT: THE ADDITION OF ALVES, ANTUNES, COSTA MARTINS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND CRESPO TO THE RC WOULD SEEM TO CORRECT THEIR SURPRISING OMISSION WHEN THIS ALL-IMPORTANT ORGAN FIRST CREATED. IN SPITE OF THE APPARENT RESTRICTION ON THEIR FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF THE RC, THE INCLUSION OF ALVES AND ANTUNES DOES MEAN THAT THEIR COMPARATIVELY CONSTRUCTIVE VIEWS ARE NOT EXCLUDED FROM THE POWER STRUCTURE.

6. THE ASSUMPTION OF ADDITIONAL POWERS BY THE REVOLUTIONARY

COUNCIL IS A LOGICAL FOLLOW-ON TO EVENTS SINCE THE ABORTIVE
COUP OF MARCH 11. CAN APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN OVER
POTENTIAL COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BUT WE SHOULD
NOT LOSE SIGHT OF FACT THAT REAL POWER IS VESTED IN REVOLU-
TIONARY COUNCIL.

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